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THE MILITANT

A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 86/NO. 36 OCTOBER 3, 2022

INSIDE

Death of woman arrested by Iran 'morality police' stirs protest

— PAGE 6

Rail unionists debate contract deal, vow to keep up fight

BY JOE SWANSON

LINCOLN, Neb. — In the next several weeks, nearly 100,000 union rail workers will vote on tentative agreements negotiated by rail union officials on the one side and five Class 1 rail companies and 30 local railroad bosses, organized together as the National Carriers' Conference Committee, on the other.

Under the pressure of the Joseph Biden administration, tentative agreements were reached Sept. 15 by the two biggest unions — SMART-TD and the Teamsters' Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen — just hours before the anti-labor Railway Labor Act would have finally permitted the unions to strike.

These workers, as well as those in other rail unions who reached tentative agreements in the weeks before, will receive their draft contracts to read and discuss, and ballots will come in the mail for members to vote by the end of September. It is estimat-

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White House, FBI attacks on constitutional rights continue

BY TERRY EVANS

Since Joseph Biden's Sept. 1 speech singling out "MAGA Republicans" as a "clear and present danger," the president and other Democrats continue to target former President Donald Trump and the tens of millions who voted for him as a danger to "national security." Backed by the liberal media and middle-class left, they hail the role of the FBI, which specializes in spying and disruption against unions and working people.

Washington's political police are trampling on constitutional freedoms that working people have fought for and need. Regardless of who these forces go after today, tomorrow they will focus their attention and attacks on the working class and its vanguard. This is a law of history.

Freedom to assemble, to speak out and organize, to protest are crucial for workers involved in today's strike struggles for higher wages amid soaring prices, for shift schedules that allow time for family life, and against speedup

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Protest Putin's new war moves! Defend Ukraine independence!

Protests in Russia: 'No to war! No to mobilizations!'

Above, Matthew Luxmoore; inset, Denis Zakharov

Protesters, left, in Ulan-Ude in East Siberia carry signs Sept. 21 opposing war with Ukraine, new mobilization. Inset, hundreds rally in central Moscow, chanting, "No war!" and "Send Putin to the trenches!" Thousands protested across Russia despite police attacks, hundreds of arrests.

BY ROY LANDERSEN

Advances by Ukrainian forces, backed by the local population, fighting Moscow's invasion have set back Russian President Vladimir Putin's attempt to crush the country's independence. Weakened by recent battlefield reversals, Putin's regime also faces growing pressure from opponents at home, as well as from allied governments in China and India that want to see an end to the war.

SWP campaign statement p. 6

For the first time, the Kremlin was forced to admit a defeat when it lost more territory in northeastern Ukraine in one week than it had gained in five months of murderous assaults on Ukraine's sovereignty.

Putin responded to these losses with a prerecorded war speech televised Sept. 21 announcing a major escalation of his war of conquest. Reiterating his lies that Ukraine is a neo-Nazi regime being used by "the West" as an "anti-Russia bridgehead," Putin announced he has ordered the mobilization of military reservists —

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Hurricane damage in Puerto Rico is result of capitalism, US colonial rule

Asociación de Jubilados de la Autoridad de Energía Eléctrica

Retirees at weekly pension protest at electric authority offices in San Juan, Puerto Rico, after Hurricane Fiona Sept. 21. They said, "Neither Fiona, Luma, or Junta will stop our struggle."

BY SETH GALINSKY

"Once again we're resisting the onslaught," Lenis Rodríguez said by phone from Yabucoa, one of the hardest hit areas in the eastern part of the U.S. colony of Puerto Rico Sept. 20. He was referring to hurricanes Fiona, which made landfall there Sept. 17, and Maria, which devastated the island almost exactly five years before. Rodríguez works at a pharmaceutical company and is a well-known community organizer.

"It's people in the community who are helping each other, not the government," he said, from repairing damaged homes to providing meals for storm victims.

Even though the damage from Fiona, a Category 1 storm, was less than from Category 4 Maria, massive flooding and 85 mph winds did considerable damage. Some came on

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SWP campaigns to build support for labor battles, win new readers

BY VIVIAN SAHNER

Members of the Socialist Workers Party — and Communist Leagues in Australia, Canada and the U.K. — are going out to workers' doorsteps, union picket lines, labor movement events and protest actions to discuss conditions confronting workers and farmers today, what we can do to defend ourselves, and to offer solidarity to working-class struggles.

They are presenting the party's program on the big questions in U.S. and world politics, part of an eight-week campaign to sell 1,350 *Militant* subscriptions, the same number of books by SWP leaders and other revolutionaries, and raise $140,000 for the annual SWP Party-Building Fund.

The *Militant* has unique coverage of labor struggles and the crucial place of building solidarity, which makes it an invaluable tool in building the union movement.

At several rail yards this week, workers stopped to speak with party members about proposed rail contracts, as well as the increasingly dangerous working conditions they face.

"One car could wipe out half of Houston," Gary Cockerham, an engineer

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–On the picket line, p. 5–

Chicago bakery workers bring solidarity to Iowa strikers

Home nursery workers in Jerusalem demand pay hike

Rolls-Royce workers end strike, ‘will win more in future fights’

BY STEVE PENNER

MONTREAL — The 530 members of the Confederation of National Trade Unions (CSN) at Rolls-Royce Canada, who repair and overhaul aircraft engines, decided by a vote of 62% Sept. 1 to accept a conciliator’s report and end their hard-fought five-and-a-half-month fight against the concession demands from the company.

The eight-year agreement, which is retroactive to 2020, includes wage increases totaling 25% and a signing bonus of $5,500 Canadian dollars ($4,145). Some workers were unhappy they hadn’t been able to win a cost-of-living clause in the contract, to ensure that wages would increase automatically to meet rising prices.

“It’s not the best, but it’s something we can live with,” Adlai Ceasar, who has worked at the plant for 18 years, told the *Militant*, expressing the attitude of many workers. For him the key gain of the strike is that “Rolls-Royce will have to take us more seriously now. We’ve shown we’re not afraid to walk out. We’ll be able to win more in the future.”

Many workers considered the fight over pensions the most important issue in the strike. Under the new agreement, the defined benefit plan, which the strikers had fought to maintain, will continue through Dec. 31, 2025.

Sometime before then the workers will vote on a new pension plan. The plan the union favors is less secure than the current defined benefit plan, which is off the table. In it if the value of the pension fund investments declines so could the benefits.

Pascal Ouellet, an inspector who has worked at Rolls-Royce for 14 years, told the *Militant* that it’s a “real blow” that the union wasn’t able to force the company to rehire Frederic Labelle, the union president, who was fired during the lockout. Labelle says his firing was “a frame-up” and an attempt to break the union.

In addition, the company says it’s investigating Hrvoje Golek, a member of the negotiating committee, and Paul D’Amico, a former union president, and could take disciplinary action against them.

Ouellet was also disappointed that they had lost the defined benefit plan, but said, “We were told by the union that there was nothing more to win on the pensions.” Nevertheless, he said, it was crucial “we took the fight to the company. The membership held strong for six months. It was a beautiful show of solidarity.”

The union had voted down two previous company offers by overwhelming majorities. This was the union’s first strike at Rolls-Royce Canada in almost 50 years.

Steeve Mayer, a picket captain during the strike who has worked there for 23 years, said, “Many members got involved actively in unionism” for the first time through the lockout. “We went back to work with our heads held high because we won respect.”

Their fight won support from other workers, including striking bakery workers at Bridor on the Montreal south shore, Canadian National Railroad train conductors, construction workers, bus drivers and health care workers. And Rolls-Royce strikers joined the picket line of CN signal workers on strike.

Two hundred of the Rolls-Royce workers and their supporters marched and rallied at Quebec Premier Francois Legault’s office here Aug. 3 to protest the Quebec provincial government giving millions of dollars in handouts to Rolls-Royce bosses.

“When Rolls-Royce went into lockdown we all decided together that we would not give in to intimidation,” Labelle said. “We may not have won everything we wanted, but we still got substantial improvements over what the company wanted to impose on us in the first place. We were right to hold our own!”

Jim Upton, a retired member of the CSN local, contributed to this article.

Read about the battles that forged the US labor movement

pathfinderpress.com

Thousands protest in Haiti as gasoline price doubles

Etant Dupain

Thousands have taken to the streets in Haiti over the last three weeks since the government announced the price of gasoline would more than double. Protesters blocked roads throughout the capital, Port-au-Prince. Schools and businesses closed as streets were blocked.

The actions followed demonstrations across Haiti Aug. 22, above, by thousands protesting the growing scarcity of gas and diesel, and demanding that Prime Minister Ariel Henry step down. “I need the gas to work,” 28-year-old moto-taxi driver Garry Larose said as he marched. “I have a family to feed, school to pay.”

Inflation in Haiti has surged to over 30%, the highest rate in a decade. The price of food has increased by 52%, with the cost of other basic goods such as rice more then quadrupling.

The capitalist class and its backers in Washington haven’t been able to create a stable government in Haiti. Large swaths of the country are under the control of criminal gangs. Unable to support their families, thousands have fled Haiti aboard rickety boats filled with hundreds. Dozens have died at sea in recent months.

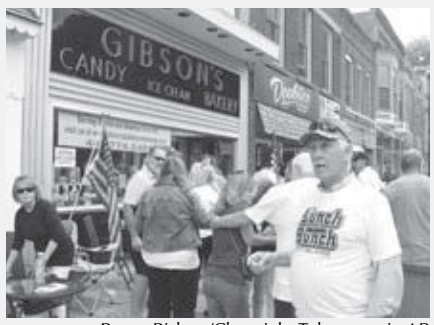
The Joseph Biden administration deported more than 26,000 Haitians between September 2021 and June this year, more than half of them children or parents traveling with children. Overall, Biden has presided over the deportation of more than 1.1 million people.

— VIVIAN SAHNER

THE MILITANT

Gibsons win fight against Oberlin College smears

After six years of race-baiting and slander by administrators at Oberlin College, the family that owns Gibson’s bakery in the college town won its lawsuit and will be paid $36 million. The ‘Militant’ has told the truth about their fight since the beginning, helped win support.



Bruce Bishop/Chronicle-Telegram via AP

Supporters of Gibson family’s fight against slander campaign in front of bakery Sept. 7.

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Signed articles by contributors do not necessarily represent the *Militant*’s views. These are expressed in editorials.

Win new 'Militant' readers

Continued from front page

with BNSF in Haslet, Texas, told Dennis Richter and Josefina Otero Sept. 20, explaining he sometimes hauls 20 cars of hazardous material. He said he's in favor of shorter trains and a crew of at least two workers.

Like many other rail workers, he said that another of the issues being fought over in the proposed contract is work schedules. "I can't even go to my son's graduation," he said, and time with his wife is only "in passing and on vacations." Cockerham and another engineer bought the *Militant* and took SWP election campaign literature.

The SWP and CL are running campaigns that champion and build support for strikes and other struggles by working people and our unions.

"Rail workers battle bosses over deadly job conditions," the main headline in the Sept. 26 issue of the *Militant*, caught the attention of Amtrak workers in Oakland, California, at their shift change Sept. 15. Joel Britton, SWP candidate for governor, and campaign supporter Carole Lesnick showed the newsweekly to mechanics and others as they drove by. One bought an introductory subscription, 12 others stopped to pick up single issues of the paper and contributed $5 toward the Party-Building Fund.

Interest in SWP at Texas book fair

"For me a *Militant* subscription will be a way to get the truth about what is happening in the world," Laurent Shumbusha told Gerardo Sánchez, SWP candidate for Congress in Texas, at the Pathfinder booth during the first ever Trinity River Book Festival in Fort Worth Sept. 17.

Shumbusha, a student at Texas Christian University, said he was concerned how his family members would provide for themselves if they were thrown out of work. Sánchez told him the SWP campaigns for a union-led fight for a federally funded public works program to put millions to work at union-scale pay, to build the houses, hospitals and many other things working people need.

"You don't get this from social media," Shumbusha said about the *Militant*, "and you can't trust what you see on the news because it's a business." Sánchez said the SWP explains why workers need to organize independently of the bosses and their Democratic and Republican parties. Shumbusha got *Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power* by SWP National Secretary Jack Barnes, one of the books on special offer during the fall campaign, along with a subscription.

The Pathfinder booth, staffed by Sánchez and other SWP members, was well received. Fairgoers bought five subscriptions to the *Militant* and 16 books. Alyson Kennedy, SWP candidate for Texas governor, was invited by the organizers to speak on a panel about the Pathfinder titles, which offer a class-struggle approach to all political questions and a revolutionary road forward.

In Seattle, SWP members and other unionists are building support for 1,200 members of the International Association of Machinists, who went on strike Sept. 12 against Weyerhaeuser in Longview, Washington. The sawmill workers, equipment operators and log truck drivers had been working under an expired contract since May 31. They say the company's offer of a small wage increase, while cutting vacation time and raising health care costs, is unacceptable.

During a visit to their picket line SWP member Jacob Perasso joined discussions on how broader solidarity could be built in the unions. One striker got a copy of the *Militant*, telling Perasso that he agreed with the need to defend constitutional freedoms under assault today. "Ultimately the attack is aimed at the working class and our unions as we begin to fight like you have done," Perasso said.

Eleven books are on special offer when purchased with a *Militant* subscription. In addition, all other titles published by Pathfinder are available at a 20% discount.

A key part of the campaign is raising contributions for the SWP's Party-Building Fund drive. Party members are unionists in the thick of today's struggles, and the party is entirely financed from contributions by working people.

Join in! Contact the SWP or Communist League branch nearest you, listed on page 8.

Militant/Josefina Otero

BSNF rail worker Gary Cockerham, left, told SWP member Dennis Richter, center, in Ft. Worth Sept. 20 about how crew cuts and increasingly longer trains make rail work more dangerous.

'Militant' Prisoners' Fund

The fund makes it possible to send prisoners reduced rate subscriptions. Send a check or money order payable to the 'Militant' and earmarked "Prisoners' Fund" to 306 W. 37th St., 13th Floor, New York, NY 10018. Or donate online at www.themilitant.com

French book fair: 'We absolutely have to change the world'

BY DEREK JEFFERS

BRETIGNY-SUR-ORGE, France — "I'm happy to buy this book. We absolutely have to change this world, but first we have to understand it," said Marie Dechelle, a computer science student in Paris, as she bought the French edition of the latest Pathfinder book, *Labor, Nature, and the Evolution of Humanity: The Long View of History*. She had stopped at the Pathfinder Press stand at the Sept. 9-11 Fete de l'Humanite here. Organized annually by the daily newspaper of the French Communist Party, the event attracts tens of thousands of workers and youth.

Pathfinder supporters sold 227 books during the weekend, the most ever sold at the Fete, including 49 copies of the new Pathfinder title, which features articles by Frederick Engels, Karl Marx and Socialist Workers Party leaders George Novack and Mary-Alice Waters. Twenty-one copies were sold of the French edition of *The Jewish Question: A Marxist Interpretation*, which explains the class roots of Jew-hatred and the fact there is "no solution to the Jewish question under capitalism." Fifteen people bought copies of the *Militant*.

Especially striking this year was the large numbers of young people who made their way to the Village du livre, the part of the Fete reserved for book tables. Roughly half of the Pathfinder books sold during the weekend were sold there.

Safia Ouabaid and Roman Laniel, students from Amiens, an industrial city 100 miles north of Paris, bought the French edition of *Thomas Sankara Speaks*, as did 36 others. "How can revolts like those in Tunisia or Algeria be transformed into revolutions that really change things?" Ouabaid asked. "Up until now, there have been a lot of revolts in the Arab countries, but they haven't led to much change."

A group of young people from Cork, Ireland, bought several Pathfinder titles. One of them, a student originally from Oman, bought three Pathfinder books in Arabic: *Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power* by SWP National Secretary Jack Barnes; *Is Biology Woman's Destiny?* by Evelyn Reed; and *The First and Second Declarations of Havana*.

Canada Communist League candidates protest deportations

BY MICHEL DUGRE AND JOHN STEELE

MONTREAL — Two hundred people marched here Sept. 18 under the slogan "Status for all," calling on the Canadian government to grant permanent resident status to all undocumented migrants in the country. The action was part of a cross-Canada mobilization.

Some carried signs demanding "No to detentions and expulsions," in response to Ottawa's border cops who daily hunt down immigrant workers the state considers illegal, holding them prisoners in so-called detention centers for weeks, months, even years, with the ultimate aim of deporting them.

Katy LeRougetel, Communist League candidate for Quebec's National Assembly in the east-end Montreal constituency of Anjou-Louis-Riel and member of the Bakery, Confectionery, Tobacco Workers and Grain Millers union, joined the protest in solidarity. She asked fellow marcher Mamadou Konate why he had decided to wage a public fight when presented with a deportation order. "If we don't go public, who will?" he said. "We are 500,000 undocumented people in Canada."

"The Communist League campaigns against all deportations," LeRougetel told him. "In the bakery where I work, workers come from all over the world. Defending immigrant rights is essential for uniting workers to fight together against the bosses' attacks. It is a life-and-death question for our unions."

Konate said he faces an immediate threat of deportation back to the Ivory Coast, where his life could be in danger because of his activities against government policies there.

He has been in Canada for six years, has a work permit and worked several jobs before he answered the Quebec government's appeal for help to deal with the disastrous impact of the pandemic among the elderly. The 41-year-old worker contracted COVID-19 while working in a long-term care seniors home.

LeRougetel and fellow CL candidate Felix Vincent Ardea, a Canadian National Railway conductor and member of the Teamsters union running in the constituency of Marquette, were told by election officials they both are on the ballot in the upcoming provincial elections. They had turned in more than 300 signatures of working people supporting their right to be on the ballot, well over the requirement.

"This means that working people will now have a working-class voice in these elections," Ardea told the *Militant*.

Militant/Michel Dugre

Katy LeRougetel, Communist League candidate for Quebec's National Assembly in Montreal, talks with Mamadou Konate Sept. 18 at action protesting deportation of immigrant workers.

Storm crisis caused by capitalism

Continued from front page

top of destruction from Maria that has never been repaired.

Beside what was done to people's homes and vehicles, many agricultural crops were destroyed.

As in past storms working people were left to their own devices. The government did almost nothing to organize evacuations of the most threatened areas in advance, simply warning residents to "activate your emergency plan" and telling them to remain indoors. That was of little help in the face of the 30 inches of rain that inundated the island, especially in the southern and eastern regions.

The damage was a lot worse than it had to be in Yabucoa, Rodríguez said. "The municipal government didn't even make sure the drainage ditches were cleaned out" before the storm hit.

The storm knocked out drinking water and electricity for most of the island. As of Sept. 20, more than half the population of 3.2 million people were still without both of them. For decades the government-owned electrical company has skimped on maintenance, didn't replace antiquated equipment, and took few measures to protect power lines and stations from the frequent tropical storms.

A year ago the government turned control of the electrical grid over to Luma, a U.S.-Canadian private business venture, claiming this would pave the way for solving the problems. The new setup has served mostly to line the pockets of Luma's owners.

After Hurricane Maria the local government received $3 million from the Federal Emergency Management Agency to help fishermen, Julio Angel Morales Alicea, secretary of the Yabucoa Fisherman's Association, told the *Militant*. "Where did that money go? It didn't go to help us."

The crisis has gotten worse since then, he said. "That storm cleaned out the sea floor. Now we have to go out farther to fish and the catch has gotten smaller." But the prices fishermen pay for supplies have skyrocketed. "I used to pay $15 for fuel for the boat. Now I'm paying $40 to $50. A spool of fishing line went from $24 to $100.

"The politicians don't care about us," Morales said.

Farmer Javier Colón lost a good part of his banana crop near Yabucoa. He also has 200 head of cattle, but hasn't been able to check up on them. He's hoping the government will provide help for buying seeds to replant crops destroyed by Fiona, but the colony "is not really in our hands," he said.

Colón rents his farm and grazing land from the Puerto Rican government. "They won't reduce the rent after a disaster. They say the Junta won't allow it." The Junta is the Financial Oversight and Management Board that was imposed by former President Barack Obama and the U.S. Congress in 2016 to maximize payment to capitalist bondholders for the government's more than $70 billion debt.

FBI attack in Puerto Rico

Because of the storm the Cuba Solidarity Committee of Puerto Rico postponed a planned Sept. 17 picket line in San Juan to denounce FBI harassment of participants in last July's Juan Rius Rivera Solidarity Brigade to Cuba and to call for an end of the U.S. economic war against the Cuban Revolution.

The U.S. rulers' political police visited or called nearly 60 people in Puerto Rico at the end of August, claiming they just wanted to talk. Some agents said they were investigating "criminal activity" or "infiltration" of the brigade by Cuban security.

The committee immediately responded to the FBI operation. It made sure brigadistas knew there was no reason to talk to the FBI, held a press conference and called for letters of support.

"Since then we haven't heard of any more calls or visits by the FBI," Milagros Rivera, president of the committee, told the *Militant*. "But we can't let down our guard. We don't know if they're planning to initiate a frame-up."

Metro PR

Volunteers start cleanup activities in Toa Baja, Puerto Rico, Sept 21. In face of colonial government's inaction, working people have come to each other's aid to confront storm's impact.

"What we do is legal," Rivera said. "We have no commercial relations with Cuba. We bring humanitarian aid. In our last brigade we traveled to Cuba on U.S. airlines following all the regulations."

At the annual Grito de Lares pro-independence demonstration coming up on Sept. 23, the committee is on the speakers list and plans to invite people to sign up for next year's brigade to Cuba. That brigade will take part in actions commemorating the 70th anniversary of Fidel Castro's attack on the Moncada Barracks, which marked the opening of the Cuban Revolution and the 125th anniversary of the U.S. military invasion and its imperialist domination of Puerto Rico.

"The disgrace Puerto Rico faces is not from the hurricanes," Rivera said. "It's the capitalist policy of the rulers of our country. They take no responsibility for planning or preparation. The resources and aid that is sent are stolen. In Utuado five years after Hurricane Maria, they still hadn't replaced the temporary bridge with a permanent one. Five years! The temporary one collapsed from Fiona."

That's the opposite "of the way it's done in Cuba," she said, the result of the socialist revolution there. In Cuba the revolutionary government mobilizes working people in advance of major storms, organizing evacuations, and ensuring people who need to get to shelters well before the storm make landfall. Their slogan is, "No one is left on their own."

Rivera said that the storm destruction won't stop people from standing up to the capitalist government and to U.S. colonial rule. She pointed to weekly protests by retirees in front of the government electric authority offices. They sent out a message saying, "Neither Fiona, Luma, or the Junta will stop our struggle. The picket line is on for Sept. 21."

Washington seized Puerto Rico, denied constitutional rights

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

As Washington announced its emergence as an imperialist power by seizing a series of Spanish colonies in the 1898 Spanish-American War, the U.S. Supreme Court over the next few years sharply limited constitutional rights and protections for residents of the U.S. rulers' new possessions. They included Puerto Rico, Philippines, Guam, American Samoa and, two decades later, the U.S. Virgin Islands.

These rulings — known as the Insular Cases — are still on the books today. They described those inhabiting these U.S. colonial possessions as "savage tribes" and "an uncivilized race."

One of the first of these cases was Downes v. Bidwell in 1901, aimed at letting the capitalist rulers establish iron control over the riches and people of these territories. The case involved a tax issue, but the ruling was much broader.

Justice Henry Billings Brown, writing for the majority, ruled that the Constitution could be applied in U.S. conquest of "contiguous territor[ies] inhabited only by people of the same race or by scattered bodies of native Indians." But not in colonies the U.S. rulers seized that were "inhabited by alien races, differing from us in religion, customs, laws, methods of taxation and modes of thought."

Five years earlier Brown had issued the court's ruling in Plessy v. Ferguson, the infamous decision holding that Black people could be relegated to "separate but equal" treatment, a decision that legalized Jim Crow segregation and remained in place for almost 60 years. It is no accident that the U.S. rulers wanted sanction for the oppression of Blacks at home and subjugated colonial peoples abroad at the same time.

The Insular Cases also drew a distinction between "incorporated" territories like Hawaii, Oklahoma and New Mexico, and "unincorporated" possessions, like Puerto Rico, that were to be kept in colonial bondage. The high court ruled that only "fundamental rights" apply in these territories, but didn't say what those were. It did say those rights didn't include the right to vote, and a further decision in 1922 said the right to trial by jury in Puerto Rico was not "fundamental" enough.

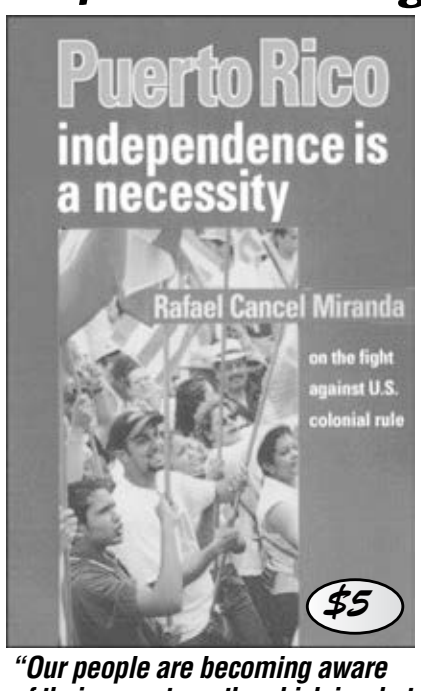
There is growing political pressure in Puerto Rico and beyond today to get rid of naked justification for colonial rule. In a case decided by the Supreme Court April 22, Supplemental Security Income was denied to José Luis Vaello Madero, a resident of Puerto Rico, even though he had been eligible for it earlier as a resident of New York. Both the Trump and Biden administrations had defended the government against a lawsuit by Vaello Madero. Justice Neil Gorsuch wrote a commentary to the decision sharply opposing the continued existence of the Insular Cases.

"A century ago in the Insular Cases, this Court held that the federal government could rule Puerto Rico and other territories largely without regard to the Constitution," he wrote. "It is past time to acknowledge the gravity of this error and admit what we know to be true: The Insular Cases have no foundation in the Constitution and rest instead on racial stereotypes. They deserve no place in our law."

"The flaws in the Insular Cases are as fundamental as they are shameful," he continued. "Nothing in the Constitution speaks of 'incorporated' and 'unincorporated' Territories. Nothing in it extends to the latter only certain supposedly 'fundamental' constitutional guarantees. Nothing in it authorizes judges to engage in the sordid business of segregating Territories and the people who live in them on the basis of race, ethnicity, or religion."

It is in the interests of all working people to back Gorsuch's call for overturning the Insular Cases. Better still, to join in support of the fight of Puerto Ricans for independence from U.S. colonial rule.

For further reading



"Our people are becoming aware of their own strength, which is what the colonial powers fear."
— Puerto Rican independence leader Rafael Cancel Miranda.

www.pathfinderpress.com

—ON THE PICKET LINE—

Home nursery workers in Jerusalem demand pay hike

Home nursery workers demonstrated in Jerusalem Sept. 1, part of a one-day strike demanding higher pay and better work conditions. The action was organized by the National Union of Day Care Workers, which has some 3,000 members — predominantly Jewish and Arab women — who run nurseries in their homes for children 3 years old and younger that are funded and supervised by the government. The union is part of the Koach la Ovdim (Workers Power) union federation.

Workers say their pay hasn't been raised in 13 years, despite rising prices. According to the union, the government recently increased the cost for parents by some 740 shekels a month ($214). But due to government manipulation of tax rates, the average child care worker will only take home an additional 60 shekels.

The government tells parents that "there is no choice, you have to pay more tuition so that the nannies get paid more," child care worker Ninet Sasson, a leader of the union, told the media. "But where does the parents' money really go? Not to us!"

"Some of us will lose 200 shekels a month because of the trick they did with the change in taxation," she said.

The union says that those who run the centers aren't treated as either workers or contractors. They earn less than the minimum wage per hour, while being subject to all kinds of government regulations, including staying open 11 hours a day.

— Seth Galinsky

Patient care, working conditions led to nursing home strike

PITTSBURGH — Workers from 13 of the 14 nursing homes in Pennsylvania took down their picket lines Sept. 9 after a week on strike. SEIU Healthcare Pennsylvania, their union, reached a tentative agreement with Comprehensive Healthcare and Priority Healthcare. The workers included certified nursing assistants, dietary and maintenance staff.

The strike was put on hold due to the tentative agreement. The one remaining home without an agreement is independently owned Shenandoah Heights Healthcare in Schuylkill County.

Shannon McBride, SEIU local president at the Grove at Irwin, a Comprehensive facility, told the *Militant* that one key issue was low wages of only $15 an hour for CNAs and even less for dietary and maintenance workers. Also in dispute is inadequate staffing and high medical insurance premiums.

Prior to the strike on Aug. 12, Donna Pronio, a 20-year CNA at Shenandoah Heights Healthcare, spoke at a SEIU virtual press conference, noting the "disregard and disrespect with which we are treated, including very poor health care insurance. How can we care for others," she asked, "when we can't care for ourselves?"

The tentative contract includes improvement in health care over the original offer and across-the-board pay increases. "The raises for the support staff will jump," Denise Cox, administrative organizer for SEIU Healthcare Pennsylvania, told the *Militant*.

She said the last few years have been very hard for nursing home workers. With the COVID epidemic, families couldn't visit the residents and often it was a CNA member who sat beside the bed when residents died. "But when it came to getting a decent contract," she said, "all they got was a slap in the face. That's why the workers voted to strike."

— Kathie Fitzgerald

Koach la Ovdim

Home nursery workers strike for higher pay, better working conditions in Jerusalem Sept. 1.

Chicago bakery workers bring solidarity to Iowa strikers

BY ILONA GERSH

CEDAR RAPIDS, Iowa — "These checks are for contributions by workers at two Alpha Baking plants in Chicago. We took up a collection because your strike is so important to defend the gains we have won over the years," said Beth Zavala, financial secretary-treasurer and business agent of Local 1 of the Bakery, Confectionery, Tobacco Workers and Grain Millers union, as she handed them to Ryan Hocke, financial secretary of Local 100G of the BCTGM. The local has been on strike since Aug. 1.

Zavala introduced me to Hocke. I'm a worker at Alpha Bakery's Polk Street plant who initiated the collection. The two of us drove the four-hour trip Sept. 9 to deliver the checks and take part in the picket line. Zavala called the local president on the way there, and he said to take the donations to the picket line.

For a week union stewards at the Polk Street plant collected $526. Local 100G fact sheets about the strike were put on tables in lunchrooms, and stewards talked to workers and took donations. It provoked a lot of discussion about why solidarity is needed to build a strong labor movement to stop the attacks from corporations that want to squeeze more profits out of working people.

This was so successful that Zavala suggested to stewards at the Lyndale Street plant that they raise funds too. They collected $390. "We're going to report on this at our next executive board meeting, and hopefully more donations from other plants will soon be on their way here," she said.

The 20 people on the picket line were happy to see supporters from Chicago. The strikers have won wide support from other unions. "People in the neighborhood drop off water and other supplies for us, and sometimes join the picket line," said Ray Taber, vice president of the local. A Teamster truck in the parking lot across the street stores donations and supplies for the strikers.

Jim Kersten, a Local 100G trustee, said that the rail unions, which deliver corn to the Ingredion plant and transport products made there to other locations, support the strike. "The engineers refuse to drive the trains into the plant," he said. "They stop outside, and Ingredion had to hire a scab outfit named Railserve to move the trains in.

"The company wanted us to go on strike. They want to get rid of the union," Taber said. "The scabs were bumping into us as we walked out of the plant." He said that production was way down. "Ingredion is pumping money into its scab operation. They offered Ingredion salaried employees from around the country $2,400 a week and extra vacation time if they worked six weeks here."

The union has three tents set up between the truck entrance and exit on First Street. They picket in front of trucks coming in and out to slow them down. Then they cross the street to slow them down again as they turn. Drivers passing by honk their horns and shout encouragement. "Some of the truck drivers are getting wiggy," said Kersten. "But we're not breaking the law. Some of our pickets have been bumped by impatient truck drivers."

Across the street police were interviewing Augusta Zapo, one of the pickets who had been bumped in the arm by a truck. Zapo is one of half a dozen women out of a workforce of 122 at the plant. "I am so happy to see other women supporting us," she told us.

The company is demanding that it be allowed to schedule work up to 14 straight days on 12-hour shifts. They want to impose mandatory overtime on scheduled days off. And they want to eliminate overtime pay after eight hours. "There should be a penalty against the company for working us more than eight hours," said Zapo. "They make it impossible for our families."

Their strike needs broad support. They ask unionists to join the picket line or drop off food/drinks/supplies; send a solidarity letter; donate to the strike fund; help spread the word.

Send contributions to: BCTGM Local 100G, 500 J St. SW, Cedar Rapids, IA 52404. Donate at: https://www.gofundme.com/f/bctgm-100g-strike-assistance/donate. Messages can be sent to: bctgm100gprez@gmail.com.

25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO

THE MILITANT

A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

October 6, 1997

SACRAMENTO, California — Shouting "¡Sí, se puede!" and "Justice! Now!" more than 1,000 farm workers and janitors, along with other unionists, students, and community activists, marched through this state capital September 18, led by the United Farm Workers union. They came to press for the right of farm workers and janitors to organize into unions free from intimidation by the bosses and the police.

There have been many marches and rallies this year to back the UFW campaign to organize the 20,000 strawberry workers in California. "I'm here to support the struggles of the working class and poor," student Teresa Rodríguez said. "People see the numbers out here. They try and ignore you, but people working here could see us." Rodríguez also took note of the recent strike victories against United Parcel Service and the Bay Area Rapid Transit.

THE MILITANT

PUBLISHED WEEKLY IN THE INTERESTS OF THE WORKING PEOPLE

October 6, 1972

There are rumors in the media that private talks between [Secretary of State] Henry Kissinger and North Vietnamese representatives have resulted in some sort of agreement regarding the Vietnam war. Any such agreement constitutes a violation of the right of the Vietnamese to self-determination. The only right the U.S. has in Vietnam is to get out, immediately and unconditionally!

The April offensive of the Vietnamese liberation forces has again confirmed that the Saigon regime and its army are creatures of the U.S. with no significant backing among the Vietnamese people. The horrendous U.S. air war continues.

Forceful, visible actions by antiwar forces this fall can help draw public attention to the slaughter that continues in Vietnam and repudiate the U.S. rulers' attempts to negotiate the future of Vietnam.

THE MILITANT

Official Weekly Organ of the Socialist Workers Party

October 6, 1947

Under the iron hand of the Kremlin bureaucracy, strikes or other demonstrations of the working class are ruthlessly suppressed. Any strike in the Soviet Union or Moscow-occupied territories is thus of unusual significance, indicating as it does heroic resistance to the Stalinist terror.

Such a strike was reported Sept. 25. At Lodz, Poland, 40,000 textile workers, three-fourths of them women, began a strike Sept. 15 against a government-introduced Stakhanovite speed-up system in Polish industry.

This system — stubbornly resisted for years by Russian workers — takes the speed record of an especially skilled worker clocked for a short period to whip the workers of an entire plant or industry to frenzied effort to achieve similar records. The strike of the workers is a protest against the introduction of the vicious Stakhanovite system in Poland.

Defend Ukraine independence!

Continued from front page

the first time this has been done since the Second World War — to supplement his troops currently deployed in Ukraine.

In a classic example of turning the victim into the criminal, Putin blamed Kyiv for the war, saying its popular forces were inflicting torture and murder against civilians, and were planning attacks in Russia.

He reported that referenda were going to be organized in Moscow-occupied areas in Donetsk, Luhansk, Kherson and Zaporizhzhia Sept. 23-27 to incorporate them into Russia proper. He claimed they were "historical lands of Novorossiya," not part of Ukraine. The threat is that any further Ukrainian efforts to liberate these areas — where active counteroffensives by Kyiv are underway — would be responded to as an attack on Russian soil.

Putin concluded his address with a threat of nuclear attack. "In the event of a threat to the territorial integrity of our country," he said, "we will certainly make use of all weapon systems available to us. This is not a bluff."

After Putin's speech, Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu told the press that Moscow would call up 300,000 reservists, beginning immediately. He extended the contracts for Russian soldiers already in Ukraine indefinitely.

Moscow's moves underscore the fact that Putin's forces are losing ground. Demoralization is widespread. When Ukrainian forces retook the city of Izium Sept. 10, part of their successful counteroffensive in the Kharkiv province that reconquered over 3,000 square miles, they found handwritten letters left behind by fleeing Russian soldiers. Complaining of "physical and moral exhaustion," the dispirited men asked their officers to relieve them of their duties.

Protests against the war and mobilization began across Russia shortly after Putin's talk. Most were modest and were met with police retaliation and arrests, as such actions are illegal. They started in Siberia and the Far East, with actions in Irkutsk, Ulan-Ude, Yakutsk, Khabarovsk, Tomsk, Novosibirsk and other cities.

Even before Putin's speech, protests had picked up across Russia. The Kharkiv Human Rights Protection Group publishes a weekly list of such protests. The latest runs 19 pages. It includes a billboard put up in Angarsk in eastern Siberia that reads, "40,000 killed, 100,000 wounded. What for? NO TO THE WAR! 150 days of the 'special' operation have cost 1 trillion dollars."

Virtually all flights out of Russia were booked after the announcement. Flights to Georgia, Turkey and Armenia, which don't require visas for Russians, were sold out within minutes. Then no more tickets were available for Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan. Russia's stock market plunged.

'Defeat Putin's invading forces!'

"The Socialist Workers Party hails the resistance of Ukrainian working people and calls for the defeat of Putin's invading forces," Alyson Kennedy, SWP candidate for Texas governor, said Sept. 21. "We stand with Russian toilers protesting Moscow's war. The defense of Ukraine's independence is in the interests of working people worldwide."

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky said his forces will press on with their efforts to liberate all Ukrainian territory seized by Russian forces. He said Putin's mobilization order was a response to his troops' failings on the battlefield. "He sees that his units are simply running away," Zelensky told German BILD TV. He "wants to drown Ukraine in blood, including the blood of his own soldiers."

One of the first governments to protest Putin's moves was his erstwhile ally in Beijing, which has become increasingly vocal in opposing Moscow's invasion of Ukraine as it drags on. "China's position on the Ukraine issue is consistent and clear," Wang Wenbin told the press, speaking for the Chinese Foreign Ministry. "We believe all countries deserve respect for their sovereignty and territorial integrity."

A few days earlier, at a summit meeting in Uzbekistan, Putin admitted after meeting with Xi Jinping that the Chinese president had expressed "questions and concerns" about the war. Chinese-owned telecom giant Huawei, and other companies in China, have stopped sales in Russia, honoring Washington's sanctions.

"Today's era is not of war," Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi chided Putin at the same meeting. He called on Putin to find "the path of peace."

Setbacks for Moscow

After pushing Moscow's forces out of the Kharkiv region, Ukrainian forces have begun retaking parts of Luhansk, an area Moscow seized in July after months of intense fighting. They ran up the Ukrainian flag in the village of Bilohorivka Sept. 19.

These extensive losses show Putin's invasion was based on a complete misjudgment about the capacities and courageous determination of the Ukrainian people to defend their country and its independence.

In the south, Ukrainian forces are targeting Russian strongholds and supply lines in a counteroffensive near the occupied Black Sea port of Kherson. The collapse of Moscow's forces around Kharkiv punctured Putin's false claim that the Ukrainians are really Russians and the Ukrainian nationality doesn't exist. Resistance in occupied areas, particularly partisan activity in Melitopol, has increased.

Moscow responded to these losses with a round of missile strikes against civilian targets and infrastructure in major Ukrainian cities. This reflects the brutality of the Russian political and military leaderships, who target working people. More than 400 bodies were found in a mass grave in Izium after Ukrainian forces retook the city. Russian police had tortured Ukrainian prisoners in a basement with electric shocks.

Instead of showcasing the Putin regime's power and military might, the war is highlighting its weakness. During the Ukrainian counteroffensive in Kharkiv, demoralized Russian troops abandoned hundreds of tanks and other armored vehicles and large numbers were taken prisoner or decided to turn themselves in.

Recognizing the poor state of its troops, Moscow responded Sept. 20 by ramping up penalties for soldiers who disobey orders, the same day Putin announced his call-up of reservists. Wagner Group financier Yevgeny Prigozhin announced that any deserters from his mercenary forces deployed in Ukraine will be executed.

The war has also shined a spotlight on problems with the Kremlin's weaponry. Russia has been the world's second-largest weapons exporter. But based on evidence from Ukraine, the governments of India and the Philippines recently scrapped major agreements to buy Russian military helicopters.

The Russian air force is largely unable to operate over Ukrainian-held territory, nor effectively protect Moscow's bases in Crimea.

Putin had anticipated that governments in Europe, especially Berlin, would increasingly soften their opposition to the invasion because of their decadeslong dependence on Moscow for energy sources. But under the pressure of Kyiv's gains on the ground, the German government has further shifted course from this reliance. The German rulers nationalized three oil refineries owned by Russian oil giant Rosneft Sept. 16.

This reflects the fact that Putin's war — the largest on European soil since the Second World War, with no end in sight — has shaken up the imperialist "world order," causing deepening shifts in the way capitalist rulers worldwide look to most effectively defend their own national interests. This is leading to new alliances and massive rearmament.

Death of woman arrested by Iran 'morality police' stirs protest

Protests spread in Iran after Mahsa Amini, a 22-year-old Kurdish woman, died Sept. 16 in Tehran. She was detained by the widely hated morality police — "Guidance Patrols" — three days earlier, along with other women, for allegedly violating the dress code law, which requires women to cover their hair. Amini was visiting the capital with her family when she was arrested.

Tehran police claim that Amini had a heart attack at the police station where the women were taken for "explanation and instruction" on proper dress. The cops released a video they say shows there was no "physical contact" between officers and Amini. Family members say they suspect she had been badly beaten. Amini died in a hospital after three days in a coma.

Over 1,000 people joined the Sept. 17 funeral in her Kurdish hometown of Saqqez, where many women took off their headscarves and waved them in the air. Protests spread to the Kurdish city of Sanandaj, in northwest Iran, and in Tehran, Isfahan, Sari and other cities.

The outrage over her death was so great that Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi informed the press he had called the family and promised there would be an investigation. Amini's father, Amjad Amini, said he had requested an autopsy report, but that was denied. The day after her funeral nearly all Iranian newspapers featured her story on their front page. The daily *Javan* stated, "The nation has expressed its sorrow over Mahsa's sad death." *Etemad* denounced "multiple instances of violence by the morality police." The government daily *Iran* newspaper, however, accused protesters of "using an unfortunate incident to incite the nation against the government and the president."

Police and the government's Revolutionary Guard attacked several of the protests with teargas and water cannons and in some cases live ammunition.

People should be able to wear whatever they want, taxi driver Mohammad Zamani told Rudaw news agency in Sanandaj. "How is this the age of forcing people to wear hijab?"

— BRIAN WILLIAMS

SWP campaign: Defend the courageous people of independent Ukraine! Oppose US sanctions!

Statement by Alyson Kennedy, Socialist Workers Party candidate for governor of Texas, Sept. 21.

The Socialist Workers Party hails the resistance of Ukrainian working people and calls for the defeat of Russian President Vladimir Putin's invading forces. We stand with Russian toilers protesting Moscow's war after the escalation of war moves and threats by Putin. The defense of Ukraine's independence is in the interests of working people worldwide.

Putin claims that areas of Ukraine seized by Moscow — parts of Donbas, Luhansk, Kherson and Zaporizhzhia — are now integrated into Russia, with a sham referenda to be staged this week. He threatens to use "all weapon systems," including nuclear weapons, to defend his plunder of Ukrainian territory. This makes it evermore important to get out the truth.

Putin's assertion that his murderous invasion is a defensive measure to counter Ukrainian aggression and NATO governments is utterly false. A sovereign and independent Ukraine poses no threat to Russia.

SWP candidates present an independent working-class foreign policy, one that starts from the interests of working people at home and abroad, not hypocritical calls to defend "freedom" made by President Joseph Biden and leaders of other imperialist powers. Their only concern is to protect the profits and political interests of the wealthy rulers they serve, who are utilizing the war to expand their militaries for more deadly conflicts. The SWP demands the complete withdrawal of all U.S. troops, as well as its conventional arms and nuclear missile systems from all of Europe.

The SWP opposes sanctions imposed on Russia by the U.S. and other ruling classes and demands they be lifted immediately. These measures fall overwhelmingly on working people and are an obstacle to building the fraternization and bonds of solidarity between working people in Ukraine, Russia and worldwide that can help force the end to Putin's war.

For seven months the SWP has campaigned for the defeat of Moscow's invasion. It will continue to explain the stakes for working people, above all the necessity of building a revolutionary working-class party that can lead millions to take political power into our own hands — as toilers did in Cuba in 1959 by making a socialist revolution — or we will face a future of more social devastation, world war and the threat of nuclear conflagration. Join us!

Rail unionists debate tentative contract, vow to keep up fight

Continued from front page

ed the count will take 30 days or longer, possibly without a decision being announced before the Nov. 8 midterm elections.

On Sept. 14, nearly 75% of the 6,600 members of the International Association of Machinists, which organizes locomotive machinists, track equipment mechanics and facility maintenance workers, voted to reject their agreement. The IAM approved a strike if a better contract isn't ratified by Sept. 29.

Two of the 12 unions — the Transportation Communications Union/IAM and the Brotherhood of Railway Carmen, representing over 11,000 clerical and rail car mechanical inspectors — ratified an agreement.

The Railway Labor Act, adopted in 1926, forces rail workers to go through an extended period of negotiations and "cooling off" periods that can take years before they can strike, or before the bosses can lock them out. This time negotiations began over two years ago in January 2020.

510 Trackside

Massive 3-mile-long cargo train in Southern California in 2020. Rail bosses are pushing longer freight trains, one-person "crews," unsafe and inhuman schedules, on call 24/7. These conditions wreak havoc on rail workers' lives and endanger them, other workers and communities near the tracks.

White House steps up pressure

As the clock toward a strike deadline counted down, the government's National Mediation Board — formed to "regulate" relations between the rail unions and the bosses — ordered the unions that didn't have a tentative agreement back to Washington Sept. 7. Within a few days 10 craft unions had reached tentative agreements.

One of the unions that did was the Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employees. "I do not think the tentative agreement addresses the 'away from home' expenses that my union's members need," Jake Forsgren, a track worker and welder in Nebraska and local chair of BMWE Lodge 1320, told the *Militant* Sept. 18. This key demand for the track workers has to do with the fact that they can be arbitrarily sent up to 1,000 miles away from home on an assignment and have to bear most of the expenses themselves before being paid back later. "I have every reason to believe the majority of the membership will vote against the agreement the way it reads now."

Forsgren said workers should know the vote results by Oct. 10.

The two unions that held out until the last minute were SMART-TD and the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen. The sticking points for these workers, who actually run the trains, were moves by the rail bosses to make their work conditions worse, including harsh attendance policies backed up by the threat of termination for marking off sick, as well as the carriers' demands for one-person "crews" operating the trains. Also at issue were work schedules that force workers to be on call 24/7.

The dangers these conditions create for rail workers, as well as those who live by the tracks, has been driven home by the death of three Union Pacific workers on the job this month.

Thousands of rail workers have quit over the last couple years, and the bosses haven't been able to hire replacements. This makes conditions even worse.

The bosses' position, backed by the government regulators, has been that these issues shouldn't be part of the negotiations. The workers have insisted they should.

As the Sept. 16 strike deadline drew closer, the pro-boss media focused hourly on how the rail companies had agreed to accept the "generous" wage offer the Biden-appointed Presidential Emergency Board (another part of the red tape that wraps up rail workers and their unions) recommended. They also wailed about the enormous damage to the economy a strike would cause, as bosses across the country rely on the rail union members that operate the 7,000 cross-country freight trains daily. They said a strike would cost the employers more than $2 billion a day.

To ratchet up the pressure for an agreement, Biden called in to the negotiations that Labor Secretary Martin Walsh was holding with the unions and bosses Sept. 14, hours before the deadline to strike. Averting a walkout was vital for the Biden administration, facing the prospect of shipping disruptions and a new wave of potential price spikes in the run-up to midterm elections in November.

Biden boasts he is the most pro-union president in history.

House of Representatives Speaker Nancy Pelosi made it clear she was prepared to order Congress to shut down any strike that was called. She said that it has "in the past enacted legislation for such purposes" and "it is in the national interest that essential transportation services be maintained."

She was referring to how Congress ordered rail unionists back to work in the last national rail strike in 1991 and in a 1992 lockout by the rail bosses.

The fight isn't over

The boss press acts like the whole issue is settled, contracts signed and things can "get back to normal." But most workers haven't voted yet, many haven't even seen the proposed pacts.

No one knows at this stage if other rail union members will join the Machinists and vote down their agreements. Many workers on the job express anger and frustration over the brutal working conditions and ongoing harassment from the bosses.

Regardless of how the contract votes turn out, the fight of rail workers against the attacks of the bosses will continue. And the efforts by rail workers to put up a fight is one of the reasons a Sept. 2 Gallup poll reported 68% approve of labor unions, the highest the pollster has registered in 57 years.

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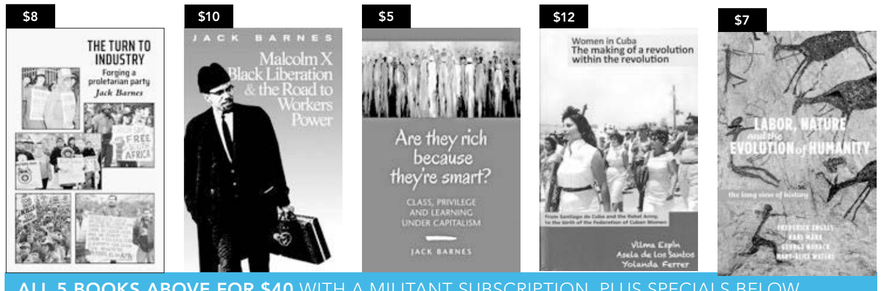

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Thomas Sankara: 'We are the heirs of all the world's revolutions'

The French edition of Thomas Sankara Speaks: The Burkina Faso Revolution 1983-87 *is one of Pathfinder's Books of the Month for September. Sankara led an uprising in the former French colony of Upper Volta in 1983, bringing to power a popular revolutionary government that organized workers, peasants, women and youth to take their destiny into their own hands in one of the poorest countries in the world. Assassinated in a counterrevolutionary coup in 1987, Sankara was an outstanding communist who followed the example of Cuban revolutionary leaders Fidel Castro and Che Guevara. At the United Nations General Assembly on Oct. 4, 1984, he spoke on behalf of a revolution "conquered in struggle by the people." That speech, "Freedom Must Be Conquered," is excerpted below.* *Copyright © 2007 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.*

Militant/Ernest Harsch

Thomas Sankara speaking in Harlem, New York, Oct. 3, 1984, the day before addressing the United Nations. "I speak on behalf of the 'great disinherited people of the world,'" he said.

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

BY THOMAS SANKARA

I make no claim to lay out any doctrines here. I am neither a messiah nor a prophet. I possess no truths. My only aspiration is twofold: first, to be able to speak on behalf of my people, the people of Burkina Faso, in simple words, words that are clear and factual. And second, in my own way to also speak on behalf of the "great disinherited people of the world," those who belong to the world so ironically christened the Third World. And to state, though I may not succeed in making them understood, the reasons for our revolt. …

This is what we glimpsed — we, the Burkinabe people — during the evening of August 4, 1983, when the first stars began to sparkle in the skies of our homeland. We had to take the leadership of the peasant revolts, signs of which were visible in a countryside that is panic-stricken by the advancing desert, exhausted by hunger and thirst, and abandoned. We had to give meaning to the brewing revolt of the idle urban masses, frustrated and weary of seeing limousines driving the elites around, elites that were out of touch, succeeding one another at the helm of state while offering the urban masses nothing but false solutions elaborated and conceived by the minds of others. We had to give an ideological soul to the just struggles of our popular masses as they mobilized against the monster of imperialism. The passing revolt, the simple brushfire, had to be replaced forever with the revolution, the permanent struggle against all forms of domination. …

My country is brimming with all the misfortunes of the peoples of the world, a painful synthesis of all humanity's suffering, but also — and above all — of the promise of our struggles. This is why my heart beats naturally on behalf of the sick who anxiously scan the horizons of a science monopolized by arms merchants.

My thoughts go out to all those affected by the destruction of nature and to those 30 million who will die as they do each year, struck down by the formidable weapon of hunger. As a military man, I cannot forget the soldier who is obeying orders, his finger on the trigger, who knows the bullet being fired bears only the message of death. …

I am acting as spokesperson for all those who vainly seek a forum in this world where they can make themselves heard. So yes, I wish to speak on behalf of all "those left behind," for "I am human, nothing that is human is alien to me."

Our revolution in Burkina Faso embraces the misfortunes of all peoples. It also draws inspiration from all of man's experiences since his first breath. We wish to be the heirs of all the world's revolutions and all the liberation struggles of the peoples of the Third World. Our eyes are on the profound upheavals that have transformed the world. We draw the lessons of the American Revolution, the lessons of its victory over colonial domination and the consequences of that victory. We adopt as our own the affirmation of the Doctrine whereby Europeans must not intervene in American affairs, nor Americans in European affairs. Just as Monroe proclaimed "America to the Americans" in 1823, we echo this today by saying "Africa to the Africans," "Burkina to the Burkinabe."

The French Revolution of 1789, which overturned the foundations of absolutism, taught us the connection between the rights of man and the rights of peoples to liberty. The great revolution of October 1917 [in Russia] transformed the world, brought victory to the proletariat, shook the foundations of capitalism, and made possible the Paris Commune's dreams of justice.

Open to all the winds of the will of the peoples of the world and their revolutions, having also learned from some terrible failures that led to tragic violations of human rights, we wish to retain only the core of purity from each revolution. This prevents us from becoming subservient to the realities of others, even when we share common ground because of our ideas.

Mr. President:

It is no longer possible to keep up the deception. The new international economic order for which we fight and will continue to fight can be achieved only if we succeed in destroying the old order that has ignored us; if we impose our rightful place in the political organization of the world; and if, conscious of our importance in the world, we obtain the right to participate in discussions and decisions on the mechanisms governing trade, the economy, and currencies on a global scale.

The new international economic order should simply be inscribed alongside all the other rights of the people — the right to independence, to the free choice of governmental forms and structures — like the right to development. And like all the peoples' rights, it is conquered in struggle and by the struggle of the people. It will never be the result of an act of generosity from the powers that be.

I personally maintain unshakable confidence — a confidence shared by the immense community of Nonaligned countries — that, under the pounding blows of the howling anguish of our peoples, our group will maintain its cohesion, strengthen its collective bargaining power, find allies among all nations, and begin, together with those who can still hear us, to organize a genuinely new international system of economic relations.

September
BOOKS OF THE MONTH

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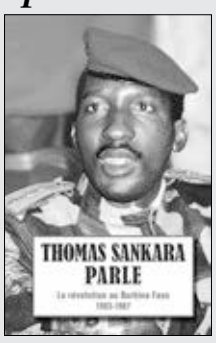

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EDITORIAL

Back rail workers' struggles! No worker has to die on the job!

This statement by Naomi Craine, a rail worker and member of the SMART-TD union and Socialist Workers Party candidate for governor in Illinois, was released Sept. 20.

Rail workers continue to face a relentless offensive from carrier bosses determined to keep their profits and those of their capitalist investors high. President Joseph Biden's administration — like all its Democratic and Republican predecessors — stands firmly behind their assaults.

Over the last year the seven major North American rail companies raked in a combined net income of $27 billion, up from $15 billion a decade ago. Over that decade, the six of them that are publicly traded paid out $146 billion in stock buybacks and dividends to investors, *$30 billion more* than they put into their railroads.

They've done so by slashing jobs while pushing to step up workers' productivity, building longer and longer trains with smaller and smaller crews forced to work inhuman schedules. This makes conditions more dangerous and threatens the lives of workers and people living near the tracks alike.

On the back of these growing profits, CSX rail bosses have seen their stock price soar 300% in the past decade. Over the same period CSX slashed the workforce by a third. Since February, the Warren Buffett-owned BNSF has set an example for all rail bosses, imposing a harsh new point-based attendance policy. It forces workers to be on call and show up for work regardless of their health, family needs or anything else, or face harsh penalties including losing their jobs.

This leads to the death and maiming of rail workers, like the three Union Pacific crew members killed this month in Texas and California. And disasters like the massive derailment and fire that killed 47 townspeople in Lac-Megantic, Quebec, in 2013.

This shows that government regulation of the industry does nothing to safeguard lives. It only serves to further the employers' ravenous thirst for profits. Rail bosses *refused* to include key questions of crew size, attendance policies and safety in recent national negotiations with our unions. They continue to push to cut crews down — one-person "crews" on the road and movements in the yard are done by one worker using a remote control device.

No worker needs to die on the job! Using union power to fight for workers control over operating conditions and safety is the only way to reverse the treacherous conditions rail workers face. Our unions need to fight for trains no longer than 50 cars, and for four-person crews, with two engineers on the engine and two conductors on a caboose or rear engine.

President Joseph Biden claims he is the most "pro-union" president ever, but when it comes down to it, he backs the bosses as all capitalist politicians do. Biden joined the rail bosses, capitalist shippers and the boss press to insist that any disruption of rail traffic would mean a "real economic crisis" that had to be avoided. When bosses and politicians howl about "the economy," they mean defending the profits of the capitalist class — not the jobs, safety or living conditions of working people.

Biden used his authority to quash our use of union power, using the anti-labor Railway Labor Act, federal mediation, a Presidential Emergency Board and more to tie our unions up in red tape and provide crucial assistance to bosses who kept raking in profits.

The sharply counterposed class interests of workers and the employers cannot be reconciled. All politics boils down to class against class.

We need to use our unions to build our own political party, a labor party, to organize working people in our tens of millions to fight for our class interests and those of all who are exploited and oppressed by capital, in the U.S. and around the world. Along this road, workers and farmers can take political power into our own hands.

White House, FBI continue attacks on constitutional freedoms

Continued from front page

and other dangerous conditions. Mobilizing to defend these freedoms is central to building a fighting labor movement, including the right to worship freely, against unreasonable search and seizure, or cruel and unusual punishment.

Unions are more popular than they've been in decades, as workers face a stepped-up drive by employers to protect their profits at our expense. Biden says his administration is the most pro-union ever. But backing the rail bosses, he invoked the notorious Railway Labor Act, tying up rail workers in years of mediation, multiple "cooling off" periods and a Presidential Emergency Board to deny them the right to strike.

The U.S. rulers increasingly fear what more working people know from their own experience — the Democratic and Republican parties have no answers to the crisis of capitalism that don't bolster bosses' attacks and worsen deteriorating conditions inflicted on us for years. With more workers looking for ways to resist, the rulers look to strengthen their state power and the FBI.

Pointing to the threat of Trump and his supporters, Biden said Sept. 15 that he had developed the "first-ever national strategy for countering domestic terrorism." He claimed a "through-line of hate" has existed in the U.S. since its founding that "never fully goes away." Today, he said, "white supremacy is the greatest terrorist threat." And, if you don't agree, Biden says, you're complicit with it.

Democratic Rep. Hank Johnson made similar charges the day before, claiming parents who challenge "woke" policies at local school board meetings were "MAGA extremists." He compared them to people facing trial on charges of participating in the Jan. 6, 2021, riot at the Capitol. Last October, the National School Boards Association similarly smeared parents as "domestic terrorists" for demanding a say in their children's education. Attorney General Merrick Garland responded to the board's attack by unleashing the FBI to spy on them.

Under the pretext of protecting "national security," the U.S. rulers have spent years trying to refurbish the FBI's image after revelations about their anti-working-class record of spying and disruption were forced into the public, including by the Socialist Workers Party lawsuit against the FBI in the 1970s and '80s. Biden's targeting of "MAGA Republicans" Sept. 1 signaled a more aggressive use of FBI snoops against his opponents in capitalist politics.

The expansion of Washington's political police has gone hand in hand with a growing centralization of political powers in the hands of the presidency, carried out by recent Democratic and Republican administrations.

Moves to strengthen executive power

Bypassing debate and legislation in Congress, more and more decision-making that affects our lives is taken by the White House and the government's expanding array of federal regulatory agencies. Their purpose is to check the lives and behavior of working people. A key role in the expansion of government powers is played by a well-remunerated layer in the middle class that has grown enormously in recent decades. They fill key roles in the universities, media, "think tanks," foundations, nongovernment organizations, "nonprofits" and in a legion of government agencies and boards.

They see themselves as smarter than ordinary working people. They look down on us, convinced they're destined to act *for* us, because we can't be expected to act for ourselves. They fear working people acting in our own interests and facilitate the erosion of constitutional freedoms won in hard-fought struggles that protect us against the state.

"This 'meritocratic' middle layer has no class policy course of its own," explains Socialist Workers Party National Secretary Jack Barnes in *Are They Rich Because They're Smart? Class, Privilege, and Learning Under Capitalism*. "To the degree they commit themselves to a course of action — often camouflaged as caring, feeling, thoughtful and above all very intelligent — such policies derive from the needs and demands of their bourgeois patrons."

Biden hires 87,000 more IRS agents

In August the Biden administration announced it will hire 87,000 more IRS agents over the next 10 years, and increase by hundreds the number of armed special agents above the current 2,100. The agency claims it will go after tax cheats.

In a serious assault on the labor movement in 2019, IRS and FBI agents raided the homes of a number of national United Auto Workers officials, charging they were engaged in "corruption" that had to be cleaned up. A number were arrested, put on trial, and are in prison. Workers know we face a variety of challenges in our unions, but it's *our business* to deal with them as we fight the bosses — not the cops, courts and prisons of the capitalist rulers. Their role is to attack and weaken the unions.

Opposing all government intrusion into union affairs is essential for building unions as an independent fighting force that can defend workers against the bosses.

Biden and other Democrats are convinced that the key to pushing "deplorable" working people out of politics is to prevent Trump from ever running for office again. They dream of convicting him of espionage or some other high crime.

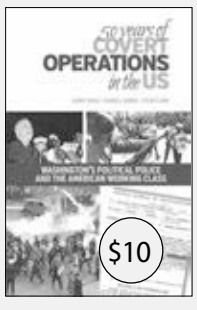
For over six years they've relied on the FBI, compliant judges and innumerable congressional "inquiries" to pursue this goal. Today Biden's Justice Department and the Democrat-led Congress are casting an ever-widening net trying to ensnare Trump and his supporters. They issued dozens of subpoenas this month, saying they had to launch a probe into fundraising by Trump's Save America political action committee. This comes on top of the hearings and prosecutions launched against people of all sorts who were at the rally and/or Jan. 6 Capitol riot, as well as the FBI raid at Trump's Mar-a-Lago estate in Florida.

In Georgia prosecutors are going after 16 people who signed on as would-be Trump electors in 2020 because they believed Trump had won the vote there. Their lawyers deny they did anything wrong, saying their actions were a legitimate contingency plan as they waited for a court ruling on a challenge to the outcome of the vote.

None of these moves have anything to do with defending our rights or improving the conditions of working people. They're all aimed at the Democratic Party finding a road to long-term control in Washington and sidelining the working class. They're a deadly threat to constitutional freedoms.

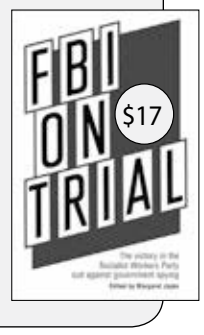
50 Years of Covert Operations in the US

Washington's Political Police and the American Working Class



Decades of spying by FBI targeting working-class organizations and opponents of government policies. How expansion of "national security" state used to protect capitalist rule had bipartisan backing.

FBI on Trial:
The victory in the Socialist Workers Party suit against government spying.



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